Broad gauge conversion in Tamil Nadu

1932. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether regional imbalance in the conversion of metre gauge into broad gauge in Tamil Nadu still continues despite the efforts taken;

(b) the list of broad gauge conversion works pending in Tamil Nadu, stage of such works and the probable date of completion;

(c) whether it is a fact that the works taken up later are being executed in preference to the works sanctioned earlier; and

(d) what is the background for it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no regional imbalance in taking up gauge conversion in Tamil Nadu.

(b) to (d) Pending projects are considered as those projects which have been included in the budget but clearances are awaited. No such project is pending in Tamil Nadu. However, 7 gauge conversion projects falling partly/fully in Tamil Nadu have been taken up. Work on these projects have also been taken up as per availability of resources and their operational priority. Gauge conversion of Manamadurai-Mandapam (96 kms), Kumbakonam-Mayiladuturai (32 kms), Tiruchchirappalli-Pudukottai (52 kms), Vridhachalam-Attur (83 kms) and Quilon-Punalur (45 kms) sections are targeted for completion during 2005-06. The projects are being progressed as per the availability of funds, keeping in view their operations priority and other considerations.

Introduction of more passenger trains

1933. SHRI PRASANTACHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would explore the possibilities of introducing more passenger trains on Kaukurgachi Chord line under Sealdah Division of Eastern Railway; and

(b) whether Government would consider linking the circular line with Kaukurgachi Chord line to extend the suburban railway system further to eastern part of Kolkata?